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A Thousand Splendid Suns

[Khaled Hosseini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khaled_Hosseini)

**Summary:** Laila wakes up in the hospital. The explosion at her house injured her badly and killed her mother and father. Rasheed, her neighbor, found her in the rubble and took care of her. Laila stayed in the house with Mariam and Rasheed. A man named Abdul Sharif comes to the house and tells Laila that he met Tariq while in a special unit, but that Tariq had died. Laila was devastated by the news and finally realized the grief that her mother had when her brothers had died. Rasheed meanwhile had taken a liking to Laila and told Mariam of his plans to marry her. Mariam is not pleased, but Rasheed likes the idea of having a young wife with whom he can have children. Laila agrees to the nuptials mainly because she is pregnant with Tariq’s baby. She knows that staying and marrying Rasheed is the best option so that she and the baby will be cared for. Mariam does not like Laila at all, especially because Rasheed gives all of his attention to Laila. Laila shares the news of her pregnancy and Rasheed is ecstatic, having never produced offspring with Mariam. Laila gives birth to a girl, which disappoints Rasheed. He becomes abusive towards Laila and Mariam both, which, along with the baby, bond the two women. They become friends and develop a plan to run away from Rasheed and leave Kabul. They make it to a bus station, but are caught. They are interrogated and Rasheed comes to pick them up. He beats them and doesn’t give them food or water for days.

**Analysis:** I continue to enjoy this book, but I have one problem with it in this portion of the story. Laila, who had just lost her parents and found out she was pregnant, decides to stay with Rasheed and become his second wife. I disagree with Laila’s choice here, because I don’t think her character as defined earlier in the story would have made that choice. She knows that Tariq had left just two weeks prior, and it was her goal to meet up with him again, so why wouldn’t she try to find him? Also, through her father’s teachings, Laila was a rather modern young Afghan woman. Her previous opinions and actions would not lead you to believe that she would settle for a relationship with Rasheed just to be protected.

**Application:** The book continues to demonstrate human roles and behavior in Afghanistan. You can see the different roles in Rasheed’s family unit. Mariam has been pushed to the side because of her infertility and the introduction of a second wife. Rasheed’s only purpose for her was to maintain the house and produce a son. Since she was incapable of the latter, Rasheed decided to move on and find a way to make it happen. He saw the opportunity when Laila was orphaned and jumped on it. The aspects of human nature are shown in Laila and Mariam’s plans to escape. Although they know the regulations for wives at that time, their desire to get out of the abusive relationship surpasses their obligation to those requirements.